

**ISCKMC 2022**  
**International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»**  
**HIGHER MUSIC EDUCATION IN RUSSIA IN THE 1970S –1990S**  
**(IN VOLGA REGION)**

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### Abstract

The purpose of the study is to make historical reconstruction of organizational features of higher music education in the Volga region in the 1970s – early 1990s. The objectives of the study are to analyze the regulatory legal acts relevant for the 70s – early 90s of the 20th century in the field of domestic education in general and music education in particular; to study published and unpublished materials that contain information about the organizational features of educational activities and educational process in music universities in the Volga region in the 70s – early 90s; to identify the effectiveness of music universities in the Volga region in the 70s – early 90s of the 20th century. The source base of the study includes published materials (normative legal acts, collections of documents, scientific papers) and materials from regional archives. The study employed scientific methods for historical research: historical-genetic, comparative-historical, etc. A high level of the educational process in music universities of the Volga region in the 70s – early 90s was confirmed. The study of published materials and archival documents revealed the effectiveness of higher music education in the region in the 70s – early 90s of the 20th century. The results of the study can be used as a basis for further study of establishment and development of music universities in Russia and for improvement of the system of professional music education in certain regions of the country with regard to historical experience.

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*Keywords:* Educational institutions, higher music education, the Volga region

## **1. Introduction**

The policy of the Russian authorities at the present stage is focused on creating the necessary conditions for citizens of the country to get quality education, in particular, professional music education. According to the provisions of the Russian constitution (Art. 43),

Everyone has the right to education; the availability and free-of-charge basis of preschool education, basic general and secondary vocational education at state or municipal educational institutions and enterprises are guaranteed; everyone has the right, on a competitive basis, to get higher education on a free-of-charge basis at state or municipal educational institutions and enterprises; basic general education is compulsory; parents or persons replacing them ensure that children get basic general education; the Russian Federation establishes federal state educational standards, supports various forms of education and self-education (RF Government, 1993, p. 45).

The main principles of the Russian policy in the field of education in accordance with the Federal Law On Education in the Russian Federation No. 273-FZ include: the priority of education; the humanistic nature of education; inadmissibility of discrimination in the field of education; the secular nature of education, etc.. The above regulatory legal acts cover the sphere of domestic professional music education, in particular, to music universities – conservatories.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Modern Russian scientists reported a number of factors that hinder development of the education system in the country and adversely affect realization of the rights of Russian citizens to education. For example, Paschentsev (2014) noted the lack of proper funding for domestic education and corruption in education; the problems of free and available education, availability of education to disabled people, realization of the rights of citizens to education under stratification of Russian society; problems caused by the Bologna process in the 20th – 21st centuries. It should be noted that intensive transformations can be observed in the field of higher education. In many domestic universities (in particular, in music universities), there has been a transition to a two-level system of training specialists (bachelor – master), which caused a number of serious problems in creating a new model for training a professional musician (Suetin, 2014). There is a low level of trust and readiness of students and teachers of domestic conservatories to use modern educational technologies, and a conservative approach of educational organizations to the replacement of conventional teaching methods (Suetin, 2020).

## **3. Research Questions**

Thus, not everything declared in modern domestic legislation on education is being implemented in practice. In order to modernize the state program in terms of realization of the constitutional right of citizens to education, modern legal methods and means, as well as more effective involvement of the state in education as a guarantor of the rights of citizens to education, are required. Qualitative changes in this field

can be facilitated by the study and use of past experience. A literature review showed that the problem of development of higher music education in the Volga region in the 1970s – early 1990s was not covered in detail in domestic science and many archival documents have not yet been introduced into scientific circulation. Thus, the study is of high relevance.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to make historical reconstruction of organizational features of higher music education in the Volga region in the 1970s – early 1990s. Objectives of the study are to analyze the regulatory legal acts relevant for the 70s – early 90s of the 20th century in the field of domestic education in general and music education in particular; to study published and unpublished materials that contain information about organizational features of educational activities and educational process in music universities of the Volga region in the 1970s – early 1990s; to identify the degree of effectiveness of functioning higher educational music institutions in the Volga region in the 70s – early 90s of the 20th century.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The source base of the study includes published materials (normative legal acts, collections of documents, scientific papers) and materials from regional archives. The study employed scientific methods characteristic of historical research: historical-genetic, comparative-historical, etc.

#### **6. Findings**

It is known that the socio-economic development of the RSFSR in the second half of the 1970s – early 1990s showed both positive and negative dynamics. On the one hand, the economic potential of the state improved significantly (increased volume of industrial and agricultural production, high level of average wages and real incomes of the population, etc.), and a large-scale social policy was carried out (elimination of unemployment, provision of free and accessible health care and education, guarantees in pensions, financial investments of the state in culture, science and sports). On the other hand, the country experienced a general decline in growth rates associated with the extensive nature of the Soviet economy, huge costs of the state apparatus, armed forces, and international politics. In the second half of the 1980s – early 1990s, there was a steady decline in the domestic economy and a decrease in the level of social guarantees for Soviet citizens.

In addition to the above processes, the state pursued a policy of reforming various spheres of public life, including the search for appropriate mechanisms for realizing the rights of Soviet citizens to quality education, in particular, in the field of training qualified musicians. It should be noted that in the 1970s there was a modernization of the domestic legislation on education, associated with the adoption of a new constitution and laws, which affected development of the domestic education system in the future. The Constitution of the RSFSR of 1978 (Art. 57) secured the right of everyone to education. In accordance with this document, the state guaranteed the availability and free-of-charge basis of education within the limits

of the state educational standard. Everyone had the right, on a competitive basis, to get free higher education at a state educational institution (Libussr, 1978).

The federal laws supplemented and defined the constitution provisions. The Law of the RSFSR On Public Education stipulated that citizens have the right to education. The free-of-charge basis and universality of education, widespread development of vocational, secondary specialized and higher education based on the connection of education with life and with production were proclaimed. The state promoted development of evening and correspondence education, provided a wide range of state scholarships and benefits to pupils and students, guaranteed free school textbooks, ensured the study at school in native language, and created conditions for self-education. The document secured the right to free vocational training, advanced training and retraining of personnel (Libussr, 1974).

The system of public education in the RSFSR, according to the law, included preschool education, general secondary education, vocational education, specialized secondary education, higher education, and out-of-school education. The best educational music institutions in the Volga region in 1970s – early 1990s included conservatories in Saratov, Kazan, Gorky (Nizhny Novgorod), and Astrakhan (Suetin, 2018).

The activities of educational music institutions were regulated by government decrees, orders and instructions by ministries, etc. Thus, development and discussion of measures to implement decrees of the Council of Ministers of the USSR No. 552 of July 15 1981 and No. 396 of July 21, 1981, order of the Ministry of Culture of the USSR No. 502 of August 26, 1981 and order of the Ministry of Culture of the RSFSR No. 502 *On further improvement of training specialists with higher and secondary education without interruption from production* of August 21, 1981 were of relevance for teachers and administration in the early 1980s (Gorky State Conservatory, 1982). For example, during the admission company for the 1986/1987 academic year, the conservatories were guided by the Rules for admission to higher educational institutions of the USSR approved by order of the USSR Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education of February 16, 1986 No. 121 and Instructional Letter of the USSR Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education of April 30, 1987 No. 24 *On admission to higher educational institutions in 1987*, as well as other documents on admission, entrance examination programs and admission requirements for applicants to music universities (Gorky State Conservatory, 1987).

In order to reveal the degree of effectiveness of organization of higher music education in the Volga region in the 1970s – early 1990s, it is necessary to analyze archival documents and published materials.

The study showed that the admission company was an important direction in the work of music universities in the region during that period. For example, in the Gorky State Conservatory named after Glinka in the 1986/1987 academic year, meetings were held for applicants to explain the rules and conditions for conducting entrance exams. Preparation and conduct of these events by the admission committee of the university were guided by the programs of entrance examinations and admission requirements for applicants (Gorky State Conservatory, 1987). The report of Kazan State Conservatory on teaching and educational work for the 1989/1990 academic year stated that during the second half of the year preparations were made for a new admission. Regular consultations were held for graduates of music schools – future applicants. The consultations were held both in Kazan (every last Friday of the month) and in the Volga region (teachers went to music schools in the Volga region).

The management and teaching staff of educational institutions were focused on the employment of graduates. According to the annual report of the Department of Opera Training, Saratov State Conservatory named after Sobinov, in 1970–1978, 64 % of graduates of the department were hired by concert and educational organizations in Moscow, Leningrad, Novosibirsk, Sverdlovsk, Perm, Kharkov, Lvov, Voronezh, Kuibyshev, Ulan-Ude, Ordzhonikidze, Nalchik, etc, 36 % of graduates worked for cultural institutions in Saratov (Saratov State Conservatory, 1978a). Of 72 graduates of Saratov State Conservatory named after Sobinov (1975/1976 academic year), 30 graduates were employed in institutions of the Saratov region (41.7 %). The remaining specialists (58.3 %) were sent to other administrative-territorial subjects of the USSR (The distribution..., 1976). Graduates of the vocal department of Kazan State Conservatory (1978/1979 academic year) were assigned to Kazan (5), Izhevsk (2), Krasnodar (1), Saransk (1), Cheboksary (2), and Vologda (1) (Saratov State Conservatory..., 1978a).

A significant indicator of the effective organization of the educational process is the quality of the educational services, which depends on many factors: the educational potential of the teaching staff and its methodological level, software, etc.

In music universities of the Volga region, the number of specialists covered by postgraduate education has increased. According to the report of Saratov State Conservatory named after Sobinov for the 1976/1977 academic year, the distribution of graduates and assistants by educational institutions was as follows: Saratov State Conservatory – 4, Moscow State Conservatory – 4, State Musical and Pedagogical Institute named after Gnesins – 3, Leningrad Institute of Theatre, Music and Cinematography – 1 (Saratov State Conservatory..., 1978a). A total of 31 teachers completed their postgraduate studies (assistantship) at Astrakhan State Conservatory in the 1978/1979 academic year, and 16 teachers continued their studies (Saratov State Conservatory, 1978b). Out of 127 teachers at Gorky State Conservatory named after Glinka in the 1986/1987 academic year, 72.4 % of teachers had postgraduate music education (postgraduate course or assistantship) (Gorky Conservatory – 24, State Musical and Pedagogical Institute named after Gnesins – 17, Moscow Conservatory – 19, Leningrad Conservatory – 31, Kiev Conservatory – 1).

Software upgrades have contributed to improvement of the quality of education. In the 1970s, the All-Union methodological cabinet for educational institutions of the arts of the USSR Ministry of Culture published a number of promising programs on chamber ensemble, concertmaster class, etc. In the 1980s, the development of modern curricula was of high relevance. During this period, one of the priority areas was pedagogical practice of students. It should be noted that in 1986 the country was focused on restructuring of higher music education (Mironova, 1989). In conservatories, special courses and electives were actively introduced into the curricula, and the schedule of classes was changed. University councils began to involve students for the first time (Rags, 1986). Close attention was paid to improvement of the quality of training. In 1987, a meeting of the section of music pedagogy of the scientific and methodological council of the Main Directorate of Educational Institutions of the Ministry of Culture of the RSFSR was held in Kazan State Conservatory, at which the issues of improving the training of specialists were discussed. It was proposed to revise some programs (disciplines of the pedagogical cycle in masterly performance).

In the 1970s – early 1990s, the methodological work of teachers improved in music universities of the Volga region. Annual report on the work of the Department of Folk Instruments, Saratov State

Conservatory named after Sobinov, for the 1977/1978 academic year states that the state exams for students at the full-time department were held at a good performing level, which was noted by Pushechnikov, the chairman of the state examination commission in 1978, Honored Art Worker of the RSFSR, professor of the State Musical Pedagogical Institute named after Gnesins. The musician indicated the objective assessment of the performance achievements of graduates by the department, and the content and quality of the performed repertoire, its complexity. At the same time, some drawbacks were noted and a more critical approach to the use of classical repertoire (arrangements) submitted for the state examination was proposed (Saratov State Conservatory, 1978b).

## 7. Conclusion

The study yielded the following conclusions. In the 1970s – early 1990s, students were taught in music universities of the Volga region on the principles of universality, priority, public availability, continuity, and succession of educational programs. A high level of the educational process in conservatories was achieved through organizing effective events with students, ensuring the safety of students enrolled (musical enlightenment, career guidance, the priority of the admission company); increasing the educational level of teaching staff by monitoring the prospects for human resources of educational institutions, advanced training and retraining of teachers, mentoring; improving the quality of educational services provided (software updates, improving educational, methodological and scientific work). In the 1970s – early 1990s, employment was guaranteed for graduates of music universities in the Volga region. The demand in the labor market is confirmed by invitation of graduates to the leading concert and educational organizations of the country.

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